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ABSTRACT

A sociolinguistic, ethnographic analysis of Christian Science oral testimonies is reported in this study. The study is based on the analysis of transcripts of four testimonial meetings of a branch church, interpreted through knowledge of Christian Science official literature, informal interaction with Christian Scientists, and knowledge of other testimonial meetings attended by the author over a one-year period. While traditional social science and linguistic approaches are drawn on, this study differs qualitatively from these approaches by focusing primary attention on the situated production of these speech acts as accomplishments of a particular community. The purpose of this ethnography is to demonstrate how the management of these acts achieves the communication of a complex, shared transcendence which is analyzed as a coparticipation in a transcendent province of meaning which unites Christian Scientists as a community. While this study focuses exclusively on particular speech acts of one community, it is suggested that the methods used are applicable to the study of transcendent communication in general. (Author/JM)

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A Sociolinguistic Study of Christian Science Oral Testimonies

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ABSTRACT

This sociolinguistic study of Christian Science oral testimonies employs an ethnographic approach to the study of these salient speech acts of the Christian Science community. The study is based on the analysis of transcripts of four testimonial meetings of a branch church, interpreted through knowledge of Christian Science official literature, informal interaction with Christian Scientists and knowledge of other testimonial meetings attended by the author over a one year period. While traditional social science and linguistic approaches are drawn upon, this study differs qualitatively from these approaches by focusing primary attention on the situated production of these speech acts as accomplishments of a particular community. The purpose of this ethnography is to demonstrate how the management of these acts achieves the communication of a complex, shared transcendence which is analyzed as a co-participation in a transcendent province of meaning which unites Christian Scientists as a community. This transcendence is shown to be a function of the situated, social distribution of members' knowledge which is achieved by the management of specialized language use within Christian Science rules of interpretation and performance relevant and appropriate to the Christian Science context and specifically to the event of giving testimonies. While this study focuses exclusively on particular speech acts of one community, it is suggested that the methods used are applicable to the study of transcendent communication in general.

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Introduction

This study is an analysis of Christian Science oral 'testimonies'[1] from the perspective of a sociology of language and knowledge.

The religious sect has evoked interest among sociologists for its potential as a case-study in the maintenance of "deviant knowledge" (Robertson, 1970). Peter Berger (1967), for example, discusses the peculiar position of a religious sect, which can be considered a "cognitive minority," formed around a body of "deviant knowledge" and faced with particular problems in the legitimation and maintenance of "plausibility structures." Most of the recent interest in groups such as Christian Science has focused on the structural or organizational features involved in this legitimation of special knowledge, rather than on the knowledge itself and the forms of its communication.

This study concentrates on one such form of communication: Christian Science oral 'testimonies' given at their regular Wednesday night testimonial meetings. The reason for this concentration is that these 'testimonies' are a routine, public way in which Christian Scientists communicate their lived knowledge both of healing procedures and cures and of the theoretical or 'metaphysical' basis of 'healing.' It is a tenet of the sociolinguistic approach of this study that focusing exclusively on the channels of communication or on the structural supports for the maintenance of special knowledge offers only a partial and distorted perspective on this experiential knowledge. In this study I attempt to overcome such distortions by an ethnography of Christian Science oral 'testimonies' as "communicative acts" or

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[1] Throughout this study, single inverted commas will be used to indicate words or phrases given a particular meaning in use by Christian Scientists. These terms will be explained at appropriate places in the analysis.

situated productions of the Christian Science community (see Hymes, 1974). This means that rather than imposing an established and extrinsic, or "etic," frame of reference on Christian Scientists and their productions, I will start from an appreciation of oral 'testimonies' within the Christian Science interpretive framework, that is, within their "emic" categories of understanding and performance. From this starting point, I will seek to develop a description of these speech acts which is adequate both to the Christian Science framework and to the requirements of a theoretical understanding of these acts as social accomplishments.

In 'testimonies,' Christian Scientists convey their knowledge, not as a formal system, but as experiential knowledge which is brought to bear on their everyday understandings and practices. I have termed this knowledge a type of "transcendent knowledge."[1] By this I mean that it is claimed knowledge of that which cannot be totally known or communicated, which extends beyond empirical referents and which can be acquired only by the careful following of certain procedures and through the aid of specific sources. While the knowledge theoretically may be available to anyone, it is claimed that only certain persons in fact possess it. What is claimed to be known is perceived through its "effects" or through empirical facts which are available to anyone, but it is subject to norms of interpretation which direct understanding toward a reality to be grasped behind and beyond the facts. While "transcendent knowledge" usually is associated with religious belief, this kind of knowledge may be claimed by many others--revolutionaries

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[1]The use of "transcendent knowledge" and "transcendent communication" should be understood as shorthand for "claimed knowledge or communication of claimed knowledge of that which is considered to be transcendent." The usage here is similar to that of "sacred or religious knowledge or language" used by Samarin (1972:230).

and politicians, scientists and poets, philosophers and lovers--all who claim a specialized non-empirical knowledge with varying degrees of power to assert the reality which they claim to know, with a variety of purposes and consequences, through a variety of strategies of communication. The study of Christian Science 'testimonies' focuses attention on a particular kind of transcendent knowledge claim which involves a disciplined reordering of individual life in terms of a reality claimed to be infinite, and which unites the set of those individuals who share this knowledge as a group legitimated in terms of that reality.

Alfred Schutz's (1962;1970) discussion of "multiple realities" clarifies some of the issues involved in transcendent knowledge claims and suggests a basis for delineating differences among all types of these knowledge claims and their communication. According to Schutz, experiences of transcendence of one's immediate, bodily, "here and now" existence take place within the common-sense everyday life and "coconstitute" the character of one's situated presence in the world. The finite province of everyday life is characterized by an active attention to daily life which is taken for granted as the intersubjective world common to us all. Within this province of meaning, the objects of life are viewed primarily in terms of their pragmatic relevance to the task at hand in which the total self is engaged to bring about a projected state of affairs in the outer world. We experience this everyday world, however, as determined by and as impinged by that which transcends our immediate bodily experience. That which transcends the immediate experience of the world--whether it be the consciousness of another person, nature, the social world, one's dream world--may be formulated within any one of a number of finite provinces of meaning. Each of these provinces of meaning is "characterized by a specific tension of consciousness...by a specific

time-perspective, by a specific form of experiencing oneself, and finally, by a specific form of sociality" (1970:253), which contrasts with the "wide-awake" world of everyday life. Communication about these other finite provinces of meaning, however, takes place within the everyday world. That is, even while intersubjectively participating in a transcendent province of meaning, the existence of the material world and its objects is presupposed and utilized in communication. "In other words, communication occurs by objects, facts, or events pertaining to the paramount reality of the senses, of the outer world, which are, however, appresentationally apperceived" (1962:342). The articulation of the appresentational relationship between objects of the everyday world and their meanings within the transcendent province encounters a difficulty which "consists in the fact that language--any language--pertains as communication...to the intersubjective world of working and, therefore, obstinately resists serving as a vehicle for meanings which transcend its own presuppositions" (1962:233).

The shift from everyday to transcendent provinces of meaning which, according to Schutz, is experienced as a "shock," involves a necessary adjustment not only in cognitive style, but in language use as well. This adjustment involves either a) the shift from an ordinary language variety to a specialized language variety which functions as a "cipher" or code permitting the apprehension of the transcendent province in a way analogous to the immediate perceptible world; and/or b) the invocation of a set of rules of interpretation by which natural language can be transformed into a means to apprehend the transcendent province of meaning. The specialized language variety and the rules of interpretation allow the user to direct attention to the transcendent province and to make connections among a new set of typifications and generalizations which apply only within its system of

relevances. The specific language variety and rules of interpretation used are markers of the specific transcendent province of meaning. Insofar as the communicative shift is successful, the transcendent province receives the accent of reality and the province of everyday life assumes the character of "fictitiousness."

In Christian Science, the transcendent province of meaning called 'Science'[1] is interpreted as "infinite" and serves as the standard against which the "finite" everyday world is judged. By reversing the order of what will be considered "paramount" reality, Christian Scientists bestow the accent of reality on 'Science,' thereby interpreting everyday reality as 'appearance' or fiction. This reversal is not accomplished all at once. Christian Scientists deem shifting between these two provinces necessary--both in order to overcome previous socialization which accepts common-sense interpretations of everyday life as "paramount" and in order to enable the use of 'appearances' as signs or criteria for recognizing the effective use of 'Science.' In other words, competence within everyday life is necessary for the 'Scientist' as a criterion by which the use of 'Science' is measured; and the use of 'Science' insures this competence. Mere competence then is not sufficient, since this competence must be remirrored through the interpretive schema of 'Science.' Given this relationship between provinces of meaning, it would be misleading to interpret the position of Christian Scientists as living in two realms--one in which everyday affairs are conducted, governed by pragmatic criteria, and the other, a separate refuge of meaning where purpose and emotional satisfaction are sought. Christian

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[1]Throughout this study I will adopt the capitalization rules used by Christian Scientists for Christian Science lexicals.

Scientists call their ongoing accomplishment of interpretive transformations by which the accent of reality is bestowed on 'Science,' their 'work.' Successful 'work' culminates in 'healing.' In 'testimonies,' Christian Scientists describe their 'work' and 'healing' thereby providing a public source for discovering one way in which transcendent knowledge is experienced and communicated.

Christian Science oral 'testimonies' are forms of transcendent communication in two senses: one which pertains to the transcendent province of meaning itself and the other which unites those who intersubjectively participate in the province of meaning. In the first sense, 'Scientists' understand that the province of 'Science' is indexed, but not exhausted, by the particular experiences told in 'testimonies.' 'Testimonies' demonstrate that 'Scientists' interpret events in everyday life as events within the transcendent province of 'Science,' and also that they understand that the manifestation of 'Science' is not limited to such events. In the second sense, each particular experience told is understood to be a token of a class of experiences which all 'Scientists' experience. 'Testimonies' demonstrate that testifiers and listeners share a bond as co-participants within the transcendent province of 'Science.' Thus, by permitting members to share in the meaning of the experience, testifiers strengthen and legitimate their own membership in the "here and now" community of members of Christian Science as well as their membership in the community of those who particpate in the 'Science' system of relevances. Simultaneously, listeners reaffirm their solidarity with the "here and now" community of those who, as co-participants in the transcendent province of 'Science,' can also recognize and appropriate the experience as an index of that system of relevances. These two aspects of transcendent communication, which unite

the community in terms of a shared reality, are interrelated by means of a specific genre of speech event, that socially-situated verbal performance which 'Scientists' call 'testimony.' This social accomplishment requires that 'Scientists' bring to bear both "background" knowledge, or what 'Scientists' consider relevant and appropriate within the transcendent province of 'Science,' as well as "foreground" knowledge, or what 'Scientists' consider relevant and appropriate to the specific performance and interpretation of oral 'testimonies' at testimonial meetings (see Kjolseth, 1972:61f). This accomplishment will be analyzed by reference to cassette recording transcripts of oral 'testimonies' given at a branch church. So far, the search for salient patterns within these verbal performances has revealed:

a) words and phrases which signal the transcendent province of 'Science';

b) paradigmatic patterns which exemplify relations between the universal and the particular, 'Truth' and its referents, 'Reality' and 'appearances';

c) sequential rules for the testimonial performance including sequential ordering of descriptions of 'work' and 'healing.'

These words, patterns, and sequences will be shown to constitute a carefully managed dialectic between what is told and what is understood, but not told. The social distribution of knowledge which governs testimonial meetings by both implicit and explicit rules of performance and interpretation will be uncovered by a careful ethnography of these meetings as communicative events. Although the main purpose of this study is to see what can be learned by focusing exclusively upon the 'testimonies' themselves, clarification of some rules will require reference to other aspects of Christian Science organization, ideology, and practices which constitute background knowledge for these events. Rather than positing these features as things over and against members, however, I will attempt to show that

'testimonies' are an accessible part of an ongoing process by which members create, maintain, and modify these social realities. My focus then is simultaneously upon the Christian Science community of members, their speech acts called 'testimonies,' and their transcendent knowledge.

'Testimonies'

Testimonial meetings are held "all over the world" in all branches of the Mother Church[1] on Wednesday evenings at eight o'clock (see Announcements 1).[2] The branch church I attended is a sort of temple-auditorium, with a seating capacity of approximately two hundred and fifty to three hundred people. Usual attendance at Wednesday meetings is seventy-five to one hundred, occassionally less (for example, the December 19th meeting had only twenty-five people in attendance, due to bad weather). There are no religious fixtures, although there are two quotations on the front wall--one from Psalms and the other from Science and Health.

The meetings follow a standard form and usually last one hour. Mrs. Eddy specified in the Church Manual that the Wednesday services should be preceded and followed by organ or piano music "of an appropriate character" where possible (Eddy, 1895:122). While the Sunday service uses uniform hymns

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[1]The "Mother Church" is the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, of which Mary Baker Eddy is the Pastor Emeritus. All other Churches of Christ, Scientist, are referred to as "branch churches" which have independent, democratic forms of government, not under the control of the Mother Church, although all branch churches follow the same manual. Most branch church members are also members of the Mother Church. For details on the relation between branch and Mother churches and the requirements for organizing branch churches, see Eddy (1895:70-74).

[2]This reference is to the transcripts which are available from the author on request.

and readings, the Wednesday service is composed by the First Reader,[1] around a theme of Christian Science teaching usually related to the week's topic.[2] Members often compliment the First Reader on his selection either in 'testimonies' or after the meeting. The meeting opens with a hymn which all persons present sing standing up. Next, with members seated, the First Reader stands at the 'desk' in the front of the room and reads first the passages he has selected from the King James Version of the Bible and then correlative passages from Science and Health. These readings usually take from fifteen to twenty minutes. The First Reader then announces "silent prayer" which lasts one minute, followed by the "audible repetition" of the Lord's Prayer by all members. The second hymn, sung while standing, follows. Members then sit for announcements by the First Reader (see Announcements 1-3 for typical notices).

The First Reader signals the beginning of the testimonial period, which usually lasts twenty-five to thirty minutes, by the statement, "The meeting is now open for the sharing of experiences, testimonies, and remarks on Christian Science" (Announcements 3). He continues to stand at the 'desk' and recognizes members who wish to speak by either turning toward them or by nodding slightly at them as they stand. Occasionally, he will direct them to face the members or to speak more loudly. Members giving 'testimonies' address members, students, and visitors directly, and not the front

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[1]The First Reader is elected by members of the branch church to maintain and enforce the discipline and laws of the branch church and of the Mother Church, for a one year renewable term. He presides at Sunday Services with the Second Reader, a woman, and alone at the Wednesday meetings. Neither reader can make explanatory notes about the service readings and both must strictly follow the order and prescriptions for the services.

[2]The topics of the week will be discussed in the section on 'Work' below.

of the room or the First Reader. The First Reader himself occasionally gives a 'testimony' by stepping to one side of the 'desk.' Any member or student of Christian Science can give a 'testimony.' A "first" 'testimony' by a member is usually acknowledged by the testifier, possibly with a note of apology. The fifth 'testimony' of March 6 (C7) is a first 'testimony' although the girl acknowledged this to some members only after the meeting.

The First Reader occasionally cautions before the testimonial period that remarks should be confined to three minutes. This norm, however, has important exceptions. If not many members are giving 'testimonies' or if there are long pauses between 'testimonies,' one of the more experienced members, often a listed practitioner, will give a lengthy 'testimony,' eloquently detailing elements of Christian Science teaching. Mr. F (A11) notes that many members feel an obligation to see that the testimonial meetings are useful and instructive, suggesting that this sense of obligation has prompted his own 'testimony.'

Giving a 'testimony,' especially for students or new members, is a sign that one is seriously practicing the 'Science.' Thus some social pressure to offer a 'testimony' is present for members. Furthermore, what is said is understood to be governed by norms of appropriateness. The First Reader notes in his announcements that the 'testimonies' to be heard "are but small portion of the gratitude constantly expressed for this great healing ministry" (Announcements 1). The Church By-Laws further state that the purpose of 'testimonies' is to "glorify God" and to "illustrate the demonstration" of Christ who heals. No description of suffering or symptoms of a disease should be included, although the disease or problem may be referred to by a "generic name" (Eddy, 1895:47). Science and Health directs that in general mention of disease or fault should always be followed by its denial or cure. The 'testimonies' do

not, therefore, reflect failures, nor any accounts by those who have found the practice wanting, except when the failure or false thinking has been corrected.

'Testimonies' are given in a calm, though usually strongly-felt manner, often in what could be described as a "loving tone." Because they often recall difficult or stressful situations and periods of failure, always followed by a successful resolution characterized as "joyful" or "inspiring," the emotional tone of the presentations changes through the stages of the account, but a controlled and low-keyed demeanor is maintained throughout.

While all 'testimonies' are reconstitutive, some testifiers attempt to tell an experience by adopting temporal case as viewed from the original unfolding sequence of events. Others simply give summaries of an idea or insight. While some 'testimonies' show signs of construction during the presentation, no 'testimony' is simply a musing or expression of present emotional state.

The end of each 'testimony' is signalled by the testifier sitting down. Between 'testimonies,' the participants are quiet, often adopting a meditative posture. During the delivery of a 'testimony,' audience members will either look at the speaker with interest or maintain a reflective pose, perhaps with head bowed. Occasionally proximate members will relate to each other by holding hands or facing each other, seemingly working on a problem together. The only vocal response from the audience is occasional musing or "knowing" chuckles at humorous remarks during a 'testimony.'

The First Reader closes the testimonial period, usually at nine o'clock, by announcing the last hymn. After the singing of the last hymn, the norm of silence within the auditorium is broken. People greet each other and talk in small groups. Some persons will contact practitioners at this time

as part of what appears to be an ongoing relationship. Members often comment on "good" 'testimonies' and compliment those who delivered 'testimonies.' These comments and compliments do not in general refer to specific aspects of the 'testimony,' such as form, content, or style of delivery, but usually entail expressions of appreciation for "inspiration" or assurances that the remarks were worthwhile. Members discuss the meeting as a whole in similar terms.[1] My own observations over a series of meetings are that some meetings are considered "better" than others in that some 'testimonies' seem to "inspire" subsequent 'testimonies' more than others. Some meetings also seem to reflect "inspiration" gained from recent regional meetings or speaker events.[2]

The 'testimonies' which were recorded and transcribed for this study are from the following testimonial meetings of a branch church:

Transcript A: December 19, 1973. The topic for the week: God the Preserver of Man.

Transcript B: February 20, 1974. Topic for the week: Soul.

Transcript C: March 6, 1974. Topic for the week: Christ Jesus. Special Topic for the Meeting: Age.

Transcript D: November 21, 1973.[3] Topic for the week: Mortals and Immortals.

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[1]This approach of referring to 'testimonies' and testimonial meetings as a whole rather than referring to specific aspects, has parallels in informal talk about relations with practitioners. Members say that discussion of "therapeutic techniques" are meaningless, because the relation with the practitioner is "spiritual." A similar logic seems to govern norms of discussion about 'testimonies.'

[2]The Christian Science Board of Lectureship sponsors and authorizes lecturers in Christian Science. Each branch church is expected to sponsor two lectures per year (Eddy, 1895:93-96).

[3]Only one 'testimony' is transcribed from this meeting. Others were unintelligible due to faulty equipment.

These meetings were not chosen for any particular reason, nor do they constitute a representative or random sample. However, based on my experience at twenty-five meetings at a branch church from October 1973 to May 1974, I consider the 'testimonies' from these meetings to be fairly typical.

In keeping with the dictum of primary reference to the 'testimonies' themselves, I completely transcribed and printed all four testimonial periods apart from analysis or categorical reference, except for parenthetic remarks and a summary statement describing the style and length of each delivery as an aid to readers who do not have access to the tapes. I have also indicated the length of the pause between each 'testimony' since this seems to suggest the difference between an "obligatory" 'testimony' and one which is inspired by the previous remarks. Only portions of these transcripts will be referred to in this paper for illustration purposes. Readers interested in the complete transcripts can receive a copy on request.

Distinctive Features of Christian Science Talk

One thing that strikes an observer new to Christian Science is the distinctive repertoire of codes and interpretive rules governing language behavior which differs from that of most Christian groups. Learning Christian Science language is understood by members to be a necessary step to achieve understanding of Christian Science 'metaphysics' and the practice of 'metaphysical healing.' One woman, a member for forty years, assured me that while "the language is difficult at first," it is well worth the time and effort of "study to master it." Once the language use becomes "natural" one understands why it is "necessary." The "Truths" are distinctive. Christian Science practice is not like any other, so that

if one uses a vocabulary other than that based on Science and Health to refer to the practice, one is "in danger of false thinking."[1]

The creation of a distinctive language variety by restricting usage of certain forms to the Christian Science context or by assigning specialized meanings to everyday forms when used in the Christian Science context, is a process shared by many religious or professional groups (see, for example, Newman, 1964). One advantage of this accomplishment is the maintenance of group solidarity through the public sharing of specialized common understandings and associations which members can readily and easily bring to bear. For example, the woman giving the third 'testimony' of the December 19th meeting (A6) gives very few details. She can say, "At this season I'm sure people that are Christian Scientists are exceedingly happy to realize what the true meaning of the Christ is" without elaborating on what "the true meaning" is. In another 'testimony' (C5), the woman mentions "Mrs. Eddy's concept of church" which members know in more or less detail and can relate to from only the brief reference. One historical reason for the distinctive language variety is the reliance on the "supplemental revelation" by Mary Baker Eddy contained in Science and Health, which, together with the King James Version of the Bible, is the 'only pastor' or 'textbook' for the practice of Christian Science. Thus, such terms as 'mesmerism' and 'animal magnetism' are reflections of the milieu in which Science and Health was written and of the beliefs and practices from which it sought to distinguish itself.

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[1]Some concessions are made when conversing with persons outside Christian Science. For example, one might say that someone "died" rather than use the Christian Science expression 'passed on.' Or one might say that someone is "sick" rather than 'has a claim.' For "practical purposes" Christian Scientists act as though matter has some reality, although they know that in fact, 'Matter is not real.'

Sociologically then Christian Science talk shares common features with any sacred language variety (see Tambiah, 1968). The sources or authorities of the King James Version and Science and Health must be preserved in their original forms. Only these sources can be read at services by the First and Second Readers and then only from the books themselves, and not from manuscripts or notes (see Eddy, 1895:32). Readings from Science and Health must always note Mrs. Eddy as the author, to ensure "right thinking" (Eddy, 1895:58-59). No variations in form or interpretive remarks by Readers are permitted within services.[1]

Christian Scientists distinguish themselves from what they consider to be material or magical tendencies within Christianity. The By-Laws prohibit pastors and priests and any form of sacramental service and preaching. Mrs. Eddy in Science and Health denounces prayer in its usual meaning as supplication and invocation and maintains that Christian Science is not a belief system, devotion, doctrine, or theology. The reason given is that Christian Science is in fact 'Science,' the correct 'spiritual' interpretation of Christianity, the principles of which can be taught, learned, and practiced. The learning of exact verbal formulations enables students to correct their old thinking and gradually learn the principles of 'Science.' The 'Scientist' 'works' and 'thinks;' he does not "invoke" and "beseech."

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[1]Readers do, however, practice their style of delivery to bring out what they consider to be the "true meaning" of a text (personal communication with a custodian of a branch church who witnessed practice sessions).

He 'acknowledges Truths' which have been 'demonstrated'; he does not rely on "belief" or "adherence to doctrines or creeds."[1]

Mrs. Eddy carefully distinguished Christian Science from psychic movements popular in the late nineteenth century. The By-Laws strictly prohibited the composition and use of written and exact formulas in 'healing' practice (Eddy, 1895:43). This dictum is not considered incompatible with the use or repetition of exact verbal formulations from Science and Health, the Bible, or official Christian Science hymns. In fact, such use is encouraged. For example, one woman recounted that when faced with a problem, she repeated the ninety-first psalm (D1). Another woman repeated the statement, "Matter is not real; Spirit is the only power" (B2:1). Another technique used in 'healing' is "vehemence" or "startling" the victim of 'error' (see Eddy, 1875:420-421). The commands used resemble exorcism. For example, Mrs. W demanded, "Error, get out of here!" (B9:16f). The use of repetition and commands is explained by members as similar to the use of correct words and phrases. When a person is having difficulty 'seeing the Truth' such repetition or command is necessary to "keep out" erroneous beliefs and to direct attention to "spiritual principles."

Just as members consider Christian Science to be neither religion nor magic, neither do they consider it to be just any science. Rather it is the 'Science of divine Mind,' based on correct metaphysical principles, from which the rules of practice authoritatively follow. The 'metaphysics'

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[1]"Belief" or preferably "faith" are terms used by Christian Scientists, but these are interpreted by members as glosses for seeing 'Reality' rather than 'appearances.' Although Christian Scientists claim adherence to Tenets, these are not considered to be doctrines or creeds, but merely guidelines for practice.

is based on an absolute distinction between 'appearances' and 'Reality' or 'matter' and 'Mind.'

Mrs. Eddy posited that the 'Science of Mind' is based on one 'Principle' or 'Cause' which is the 'divine Mind'; that this 'Principle of Being' is equivalent to 'Truth,' 'Love,' and 'Life'; and that from this one 'Principle' can come only the same. Otherwise, it would have to be contradictory, which cannot be 'Truth.' Since the 'Principle' is equivalent to 'Being,' everything which exists is a reflection of it. Therefore, that which appears to contradict the 'Principle' is not 'real.' Men have been falsely educated to take 'error' for 'Truth' and have therefore not understood or lived in accordance with their truth 'Being.' It is through 'Science' that men can again know their true 'Being' and this realization eliminates the apparent force or power which 'error' or 'matter' has over them. The 'Truth' is clear; however, breaking away from false beliefs is difficult, requiring a constant attention to 'Truth' and the denial of 'error.'

'Science' is confirmed through 'demonstration,' that is, the overcoming of 'mortal mind' and all its manifestations--pain, sickness, disease, death, discord, fear, material force and sin--by allowing 'divine Mind' to manifest itself through the realization of one's true 'Being' as the 'idea' or 'image' of God.

The 'Principle' is universalizable: if one can prove it, all can prove it' (C1:19f). The evidence of the 'divine Mind'--harmony, health, life, understanding, love--accumulates as proof of the 'Truth' of the 'Principle' and confirmation of the validity of the 'Science of Mind.' The knowledge of the 'metaphysics' or the 'Truths of Being' is in itself 'healing.' The practice of 'Science' is therefore the knowledge and the application of these 'Truths.'

Practicing members report that they read from and reflect on Science and Health in their daily 'work.' Members say that the 'textbook' is not read for exact formulas or answers, but for insight and guidance. Based on this familiarity with the text, Christian Scientists develop characteristic ways of applying the 'metaphysics' to problems and questions, as manifested by their descriptions in 'testimonies.' The maintenance of a distinctive language variety derived from this practice promotes a solution to a fundamental difficulty facing any group which attempts to maintain a reality other than everyday reality. As discussed in the Introduction, language pertains to the intersubjective world of everyday life. This correspondence makes reference to a transcendent province of meaning difficult. Use of the Christian Science language variety interpreted within the context of a systematic 'metaphysics' which contradicts commonsense, everyday usage, promotes the necessary adjustment to the 'Science' system of relevances, while permitting reference to everyday experiences as "signs" of or as the "means" to new understanding in that system.

While each 'testimony' has individual characteristics and reveals differences in educational background and ease of public presentation, the distinctive 'Science' language variety is maintained. Repertoire range for 'testimony' openings and closings and for 'work' and 'healing' description is narrow. This limit or control on language use appropriate for 'testimonies,' while exploited "naturally" by members, establishes clear, distinguishing markers of 'testimonies' as definitely not just any account or just any "religious" account.

The present analysis (below) will identify these markers and their significance in characteristic patterns and sequences.

Institutional Supports of the Distribution of Knowledge

The integration of characteristic Christian Science words, phrases and patterns within the sequencing of 'testimonies,' which will be discussed in detail below, reveals a carefully managed control of the distribution of specialized knowledge. Basically, giving a 'testimony' is the management of what can and should be told and what cannot or should not be told. It is this management which establishes 'testimonies' as viable means for the communication of transcendence. This management is promoted not only by norms of interpretation and performance governing the 'testimonies' themselves, however, but by extrinsic, institutionalized supports as well.

Christian Science 'work' is most often conducted privately and occasionally with members of the family or close friends who 'work for' an individual usually at the individual's request. This 'work' is usually silent, so that even when help is received from others, not much verbal communication takes place. Contact with practitioners, besides being confidential, also involves much silent 'work.'

In addition, some aspects of Christian Science activities are secret. Members must attend a special school in order to teach Christian Science practice or to practice as a listed practitioner. These classes are strictly limited to those who have demonstrated serious intent. Note-taking is prohibited (see Eddy, 1895:83-92). Meetings of the group of students who have completed a class toegether are continued on a yearly basis restricted to those sutdents. There is at least an informal acknowledgement that certain other meetings are closed to those "not advanced" in 'Science.'

These private, silent, and secret aspects of 'work' support the necessity for 'testimonies' in order to establish and confirm solidarity in

common practice. Even in well-developed descriptions of 'work,' it is understood that certain aspects are not conveyed through 'testimonies.' Partly this is so because of the inability to fully reconstruct any experience. It is suggested, however, that the private, silent, and secret norms are well designed to insure that the experience of 'work' and 'healing' remain largely "ineffable," transcending the range of everyday communication; and further, that this transcendent character accorded 'work' insures its continued effectiveness.

Patterns in 'Testimonies'

Despite controlled access to 'work' and the use of background knowledge in private or secret practice, talk about this knowledge and 'work' within 'testimonies' does reveal distinguishing patterns and sequencing. Two distinct patterns for talking about 'Science' and 'work' emerge: the dichotomy between 'Reality' and 'appearance' and the distinction between 'Truth' and its referents.

The dichotomy between 'Reality' and 'appearance' is pivotal to the 'metaphysics' explicated in Science and Health. As suggested above in the discussion of "multiple realities," application of this dichotomy by 'Scientists' amounts to inverting the common-sense paramount position of the everyday world. The world of everyday life must be re-valuated so that what has been accepted as unquestionably real and verified by everyday experience, is questioned and reinterpreted as 'error.' This re-valuation is marked by a repertoire of 'error-Truth' patterns composed of three elements:

1) Substantives, referred to below by (S);

2) Agency, referred to by (A); and

3) Reception, referred to by (R).

These three elements are used in various patterns to promote four sequential accomplishments by which the dichotomy between 'Reality' and 'appearance' is maintained:

> 1) The attribution of agency for sense perceptions, emotions, and common-sense thoughts to sources apart from the self, which is accomplished by objectifying 'error' and all its manifestations by making them substantives and locating them syntactically in agency slots;
>
> 2) The consequent devaluation of this agency, implied or stated, through the application of 'Science metaphysics' which maintains that 'error' is the work of 'mortal mind' which has no power;
>
> 3) The removal of the self as the agent of perceptions, emotions, and thoughts and the instatement of the self as a passive receptor of either 'error' or 'Science'; and
>
> 4) The reinstatement of the self as agent once it has denied or negated 'error' and received 'Science.'

For example, rather than describing her emotional state in the form, "I was afraid," Mrs. L says instead, "I let (R) fear (S/A) come in...and listened (R) to error (S/A)" (A5:14f). The self is viewed as a passive receptor of input from 'error' in Mrs. D's expression that she "found (R) a very strange and unhappy reluctance (S) to work and handle (A) error (S)" (B13:10f). Mrs. O says, not that she couldn't stop thinking about something, but that she "couldn't get rid (R) of that thought (S/A)" (when she was not receptive to 'Science,' implying that she was therefore receptive to 'error') (B10:7f). Alternative formulations which might be considered grammatically equivalent, cannot be used interchangeably when refracted through Christian Science norms of interpretation.

By accomplishing this suspension of the self as agent of perceptions, emotions, and common-sense thoughts and the substitution of 'error' as the agent, the 'Scientist' finds his true self open to receive the 'Truth' at which point this self can reassume agency. Expressions of agency in

terms of 'Science' are always accompanied by some expression of prior distancing of self or some form of reception, expressed through mention of a 'Science' resource or the receiving of an insight or idea. All expressions of gratitude, which implies reception, or expressions of remembrance of past reception as a promise of present reception, also form part of this pattern. A simple sequence employing the 'error-Truth' pattern is that of Mrs. W who states that "the idea (A) came to me (R) that I absolutely had[1] to resist (A) error (S)...and I heard (R) myself saying (A)..."Error, (S) get out of here!" (B9:8f). A more involved use of the 'error-Truth' pattern is demonstrated by Mr. F. First, he establishes that he cannot be the agent without having received 'Science' and that 'error' is the agent of his present problem, "I began to feel quite ill,...but immediately I began to track down in my thinking (S) just what seemed to be the error (S). I saw immediately that I thought I was doing something." Then he begins serious 'Science work' in which he thinks about the true meaning of God, as agent, and realizes that he has been assuming that role: "I thought I had to do something." In 'Science' terms, he cannot do anything except as the 'image' of God open to 'Science' which works through him. He then adjusts his position to that of a passive receptor open to 'Science:' "An then I began thinking from a certain standpoint of all the things I had to be grateful (R) for just from the human standpoint, and that of course led me to be tremendously grateful for the teachings of Christian Science (A) that do teach us (R) the Truth of Being...With that there was a great clearing (R) in my thinking (S) and I (A) forgot all about the sense of illness,

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[1]Underlining indicates strong emphasis.

and went back...It certainly is wonderful how we (A) can use what Christian Science (A) teaches us (R) to nip (A) these things (S) in the bud" (B4:1f). Having become open to 'Science' Mr. F is again able to assume agency for his thoughts and actions.

The 'error-Truth' pattern will be discussed further in the section on 'Doing Work.'

The second set of patterns which predominates in 'testimonies' is based on the relation between 'Truth' and its referents. The 'Reality' known through 'divine Science' is applied to the understanding of concrete experiences. These experiences in turn are interpreted as 'reflections of' or 'demonstrations of' this underlying 'Reality.' The basic method employed has been delineated by Karl Mannheim as "the documentary method" in which "not only is the underlying pattern derived from its individual documentary evidences, but the individual documentary evidences, in their turn, are

automatic despite the richness of the available tradition and group support. 'Testimonies' indicate the necessity for each 'Scientist' to bring together his own facts to reveal the pattern of 'divine Truth' in his own life, the struggle to "see through" to 'Reality' behind experience, to see the underlying 'Reality' beneath surface 'appearances,' and to project a desired future success of the effectivity of that 'Reality' based on often overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Three patterns are employed systematically throughout the transcribed 'testimonies:' anticipatory constructions, reconstitutive interpretations, and a progressive interpretation of life.

1) Anticipatory Constructions: Faced with a situation which may require 'work,' 'Scientists' report that they anticipate the possible outcomes by recalling universal 'Truths' and past successful 'healings.' For example, faced with a potentially disabling illness, Mrs. M recalled her successful 'healing' from a burn "and it was very encouraging to me to recall thatah it I had proved that matter was painless in that small way ah that same Principle applied in this case" (B7:18f). Anticipatory constructions will be discussed in greater detail under strategies of 'Doing Work.'

2) Reconstitutive Interpretations: Since the testimonial form is itself reconstitutive, it is difficult to know exactly at what point and in what sequence the 'Scientist' chooses a section of his ongoing experience as constituting one event as a 'manifestation of divine Reality.' Many 'Scientists' attempt to tell their story as an unfolding of increasing awareness or as a series of sudden "awakenings" as they reflect back on what has transpired, implying that they were reconstituting or constructing the experience as a 'healing' by looking back on a series of occurrences

as the sequence is unfolding. Mr. F tells about his experience of working with what he thinks is a problem, but records some hesitancy in calling the experience a 'healing:' "I might say that I'm not real sure what the claim was or even it if was something that really needed handling, but I had a wonderful time anyway" (B5:5f). This indicates that experiences must be reflected on and managed to be called 'healing' experiences.

'Scientists' will usually indicate that an event has been a 'demonstration' by summarizing the sequence by an "Is" statement, such as "This is Christian Science," or "good is omnipresent." This present tense verbal equation of identity implies that the sequence just reconstructed is somehow complete and sufficient as a manifestation or 'demonstration.' In fact, these statements or other summary statements in terms of a 'Truth of Science' constitute or "membership" the experience as such a 'demonstration.' As negative confirmation, Christian Scientists seem to adhere to a norm of interaction which prohibits questioning any membershipping of an experience as a 'Demonstration of a Truth' or as the 'manifestation of divine Reality.'

3) Life as Progressive Growth: 'Scientists' indicate through their 'testimonies' that they order their lives in terms of their growing understanding of 'Science.' Many connective statements within 'testimonies' are made in terms of stages in one's life since contact with and growing knowledge of 'Science.' As one grows in 'Science,' it becomes "easier" or "more natural" and one begins to see more, even though this insight may be recognized as "only a little" in comparison with what can be known.

* * *

In the systematic use of the 'error-Truth' and 'Truth'-referent patterns, Christian Scientists have a number of established ways available

to constitute their experiences within the transcendent province of 'Science.' Having delineated these basic patterns and strategies for accomplishing interpretive transformations within the 'Science' paradigm, it is necessary to show how these patterns and strategies are interrelated to constitute the situated activity of 'giving a testimony' which includes descriptions of 'doing work' and 'healing.' By integrating these patterns and strategies into a fairly regular sequence, 'Scientists' make clear that a) the reinterpretation or reordering of realities has been accomplished and is still an ongoing accomplishment; b) there is a structure to 'work' and 'healing' which is standard despite individual variations; and c) the story related is not individual and isolated but a part of a larger pattern which is discoverable through correct interpretation of the story.

'Giving a Testimony'

'Giving a testimony' follows a fairly standard sequence, basically:

1) Opening, usually with an expression of gratitude;
2) Telling the experience or allegory; and
3) If more than one experience or allegory is told, relating them through
   a) transitions and
   b) connectives;
4) Describing 'work;'
5) Describing 'healing;'
6) Summarizing the experience or the 'Truth' revealed;
7) Closing, usually with an expression of gratitude.

1) Openings: Most 'testimonies' open with some expression of gratitude or some reception pattern which seems to be the standard way to insure that the 'testimony' is "more than a mere rehearsal of blessings" and clearly an expression of praise and the 'demonstration' of Christ's 'healing' (Eddy, 1875:47). The standard gratitude openings are:

a) The expression of gratitude or appreciation for a rewarding experience, usually for a 'healing' or an idea.

Example: "I am very grateful to a healing I had just today" (B8:20).

b) The expression of gratitude with reference to a resource of Christian Science.

Example: "I'm very grateful and I'm sure all Christian Scientists are, ah for our Christian Science literature, as Mrs. Eddy so lovingly provided for our welfare" (A5:1f).

The expression of gratitude is omitted in other openings, although some of reception pattern is maintained. These include:

a) Reference to a resource of Christian Science

Example: "The lesson tonight on age made me think of an experience" (C2:1f).

b) Expression of enjoyment, reward or pleasure received through some experience.

Example: "I had an experience last week which was quite rewarding to me" (C9:8f).

c) Expression of enjoyment, pleasure or reward through a Christian Science resource.

Example: "The ninety-first psalm has always been a great great pleasure to me" (D1:1f).

In a few instances, the opening simply sets the stage for the experience, preparing the listeners for what will follow and occasionally appealing to common experience.

Example: "Like many people I keep in my office ah a small electric pot for heating water" (B5:10f).

2) Experience or Allegory: The story in the 'testimony' is given in enough detail to prepare listeners for the point of the 'testimony' which is the 'healing' or the 'Truth' expressed through the experience or allegory. These accounts use variations of the 'error-Truth' and the 'Truth'-referent patterns. The point of the story is not just that it happened, but that

what happened was a means of 'demonstrating the error' of material sense, of growing in the understanding and use of Christian Science, and of 'demonstrating the Truth' which applies to related experiences.

Personal experiences related in a 'testimony' are of two types:

a) A situation which is problematic, that is, in which 'error' can arise. These experiences include situations of possible or apparent injury, sickness, danger or worry.

Example: "I started not feeling particularly well in the morning and went home for lunch and I was doing some reading, and decided that maybe I would just get warm ( )[1] and I did" (B8:21f).

b) A situation in which one is doing general 'Science work' and an idea "comes" which enables one to reinterpret aspects of everyday life within the 'Science' system of relevance.

Example: "I'd been studying about the teaching on age and I was wondering why people changed, why they are young and very youthful and then changed and looked so different. Andah all of a sudden the thought came that if you have the same thoughts you had then you have the same beauty" (C2:5f).

While all experiences are meant to be understood allegorically in the sense that their meaning can apply to others, certain 'testimonies' are told in explicitly allegorical form. These are of two types:

a) "Secular" experiences or events whose significance is transferred from the common-sense interpretation to the 'Science' paradign.

Example: "Ah many of you may have heard recently on television, this young man who has made a fortune on complaints? How he seemed to attack an error and get-get right to the core of it and-and reduce it to nothing...An I began to think of it in terms of Christian Science" (B1:1f).

b) An instance from the life of Mary Baker Eddy or a classical allegory with a transcendent meaning.

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[1] Space indicates unintelligible speech.

Example: "(Mary Baker Eddy) had a little girl friend who lived next door and after a couple of days, the little girl hadn't come to visit Mrs. Eddy" (C1:3f).

3a) Transitions: When more than one experience or allegory is told, a transition between the stories is necessary.

1) The transition may be simple.

Example: "Then there was another one" (B2:17f).

2) Or it may involve a sub-closing and a sub-opening.

Example: "I'm very grateful for Christian Science (sub-closing). An I'd also like to express gratitude an for tonight's lesson andah for last week" (sub-opening) (C5: 15f).

3b) Connectives: Whenever two or more experiences or allegories are told and a transition made, some sort of connection between the two stories is usually expressed. These connections are of two types:

1) Those that relate to one's life as a 'demonstration' or one's growth as a 'Scientist' in some way.

Example: "And those two things have stuck with me, because one a them happened before I knew anything at all about Science and the other one when I was just beginning to learn" (Af:18f).

2) Those which express a common idea or 'Truth' of Christian Science.

Example: "The ninety-first psalm has always been a great great pleasure to me" (both testimonies involve experiences connected with the ninety-first psalm) (D1:1f).

These connections, which are variations of the 'Truth'-referent patterns appear usually either at the beginning or at the end of a multiple-allegory or multiple-experience 'testimony.'

4) and 5): In some 'testimonies,' 'work' and 'healing' are only mentioned and not described in detail. The subsequent two sections of this study will develop the sequence of 'work' and 'healing' based on the more detailed accounts.

6) Summaries of Experience or 'Truth': After mention or description of 'work' and 'healing,' the person giving a 'testimony' usually summarizes the experience, the value of the experience, or the 'Truth' which is expressed in the experience or allegory.

a) Summary of experience

Example: "That's just one aspect of my thoughts-the thoughts that came to me about this" (C9:4f).

b) Summary of 'Truth'

Example: "It's wonderful to be able to go forth confident, fearless, and know that there is help constantly and that at no time are we separated from that help" (A8:2f).

7) Closings: Closings, like openings, almost always include an expression of gratitude, but occasionally simply follow a reception pattern. The standard gratitude closings are:

a) The expression of gratitude for the experience, insight or 'healing.'

Example: "An I am very grateful for it" (B3:10f).

b) The expression of gratitude with reference to the specific 'Truth' that was expressed in the account.

Example: "I'm really very grateful that I don't have to struggle with it--that I can accept the fact that good is omnipresent" (B8:17f).

Rarely, a closing will simply express enjoyment, pleasure or a sense of accomplishment.

Example: "I've really enjoyed singing with the group, and ah we've gotten a lot done" (C11:12f).

* * *

The investigation of the typical sequencing of 'testimonies' suggests both that 'testimonies' permit a wide variety in terms of subject matter, length, style and complexity, but also that there are minimal requirements to constitute a 'testimony.' Three elements seem necessary:

1) A story which can be either explicitly allegorical, drawing on either "secular" or 'Science' sources, or a personal experience which can be either a life event or reflections on an idea or thought;

2) Acknowledgement of reception, by citing the use of a resource, expressing gratitude, and/or using the Reception-Agency elements in an 'error-Truth' pattern, usually clearly marked in openings and closings; and

3) Explicit reference to the 'Truth' exemplified by the story either through full explication or sufficient reference for knowledgeable 'Scientists' to understand.

The most common expansion from these essential elements is the description of 'doing work' and 'healing.'

4) 'Doing Work'

'Work' as a general term refers to Christian Science practice which is both preventative and therapeutic. This practice is spelled out at length in abstract and general terms in Science and Health, but the descriptions in the 'testimonies' are personalized accounts of how these guidelines are applied.

Practicing Christian Scientists report that they begin their day with 'Science work' which is a study or reflective reading of Biblical references and correlative passages from Science and Health which are uniformly studied throughout all Christian Science churches, according to a weekly schedule of topics. There are twenty-six topics which are repeated twice yearly. They include such subjects as 'God,' 'Life,' 'Truth,' 'Reality,' 'matter,' and 'unreality.' From this 'work' the 'Scientist' gains insights, which are often topics for 'testimonies,' and gains strenth or understanding to last through the day. Besides this morning routine, the 'Scientist' may set aside other special or occasional times to read Christian Science literature. Most practicing 'Scientists' receive all the Christian Science publications, including the Christian Science Journal, Monitor, and Sentinal which, together

with the weekly lessons in the Quarterly, are studied either at home or at the reading room. Most branch churches maintain reading rooms open to the public for silent reading or reflection. The libraries at the reading rooms contain official or approved Christian Science literature, records and tapes, for sale or use.

All of these regular activities or practices which 'Scientists' refer to as 'work' are primarily preventative and a means to increase understanding of 'Science' and to better handle problems in general. Mrs. B describes this general 'work' in her account of reflections on reading a biography of Mrs. Eddy and relating the insights to her life (C7:16f) and Mrs. C refers to her reflections on a television program, relating the material to a better understanding of Christian Science (B1:1f).

'Work' involves the basic patterns and strategies discussed above by which 'Scientists' systematically interpret events, thoughts and feelings within the 'Science' system of relevance. Mrs. M indicates the advantage of this basic 'work' when she recalls, when faced with an immediate 'claim' or problem, "a long time ago a good friend and Christian Science practitioner telling me that we should live in such a state of spiritual preparedness that we are equipped to meet any situation that arises and to meet it confidently and quickly" (B6:2f). Besides preparing one for specific 'work' on a 'claim,' general 'work' is reported to be enjoyable, both as an exercise and as a source or insight. Through this 'work,' 'Scientists' are helped in recalling previous experiences or 'healing,' establishing a continuity of understanding, and relating seemingly unrelated incidents through a concept or idea. For example, Mrs. A relates an experience when reflecting on the lesson on gratitude, "I don't know when I have been so impressed and I just-all kinds of things poured through my thought that I hadn't

thought of in years, of all the many wonderful experiences in Christian Science" (C5:18f). This establishment of continuity and interrelatedness through general 'work,' is formulated within a 'Truth'-referent pattern which sees life as a progressive growth in terms of 'Science.'

In addition to this general 'work,' many 'testimonies' contain accounts of the specific sequence of strategies used in confronting a specific 'claim.'

The first stage in 'work' is to recognize the situation as an 'error' or 'claim,' that is, to "membership" an experience to the category of a 'claim.' There are several variations in this recognition:

a) Sometimes the recognition is immediate.

> Example: Mr. F noted that he had a lot of work to do and accomplished a great deal in the morning, "however, when I started to relax a little bit...I began to feel quite ill, when I just began to wonder then whether I would get done things that I should do; but immediately I began to track down in my thinking just what seemed to be the error" (B3:14f).

b) In other cases, there may be procrastinations, "blindness to error," or resistance to beginning 'healing work.'

> Example: Mrs. M noted a major health problem and was somewhat frightened at the thought of not being able to do her regular activities: "For awhile I engaged in some wishful thinking just kinda hoped it would all go away. But it didn't. It got worse. It became very painful, andahm I realized I had to abandon that futile approach and really start to pray" (B7:9f).

c) A person may begin to handle the 'error' properly, but then "backslide."

> Example: Mrs. D had separated a dog and a cat fighting and had been scratched. She covered the wound and went about her business, but later she went to bed without doing any 'work' on the wound: "It was late, and with that very poor excuse, I just went to bed. The next morning, the marks on the hand appeared to be badly infected, but I found a very strange and unhappy reluctance to get to work on it and handle the error" (B13:7f).

Aid in 'Doing Work'

Following the recognition of 'error,' the 'Scientist' may call a practitioner, if that seems necessary. Mary Baker Eddy states (1875:420: 4f) that "if students do not readily heal themselves, they should early call an experienced Christian Scientist to aid them." This is usually a listed practitioner, although occasionally 'Scientists' will contact friends and often pay them for their services, as they would a listed practitioner. Any student who has taken the special course in 'metaphysical healing' by a certified teacher is considered a practitioner, but only those who practice full-time without other employment for income can be listed in the Christian Science Journal. Some 'Scientists' maintain contact with a practitioner even when there is no problem; others, only when there is a problem. Relations with practitioners and payment practices may vary slightly, depending on the area of the country and the practitioner. The fee for contact with a practitioner is usually low, perhaps $3 to $5. A practitioner may establish a monthly rate which insures that he or she will continue to 'work' for the individual or family whether a specific problem exists or not. It is generally understood that if no benefit were received, a fee would not be assessed, although such an occurrence seems rare. In doing specific 'work,' the 'Scientist' may choose from a variety of options to establish relations with a listed or unlisted practitioner:

a) A student will call a practitioner often after failure to work out a problem alone and it becomes apparent that the problem is worsening considerably.

Example: Mrs. W testified that she had "given into error" began to feel "quite badly" in fact so badly that I didn't even feel like driving back home. And so I called a practitioner" (B9:3f).

Under these circumstances,

(1) the practitioner may give a specific directive.

Example: Mrs. O called a practitioner, "Andah, she said, 'Look away from the problem and realize God's living presence made manifest'" (B10:13f).

(2) the practitioner may discuss the situation with the patient by using 'spiritual argument.'

Example: Mrs. D noted: "We talked about the fact that one of God's ideas couldn't possibly harm another of God's ideas and that actually nothing was wrong and that everything was expressed by Him that was involved in this matter." She says that the practitioner also worked on the fear (B13:17f).

b) Instead of calling a practitioner, a person might recall previous 'work' with a practitioner which is helpful in the situation at hand. An example already mentioned is that of Mrs. M who recalled the counsel to always be in a state of spiritual preparedness (B6:2f).

c) Besides these direct contacts with practitioners, a current emphasis in Christian Science, especially for more experienced members, is 'healing at a distance.' A person may have a practitioner 'working' for him with little or no contact over a period of time, or may call and ask for 'work' while receiving no specific directive or argument. The person receiving the 'work' reports at regular intervals to keep the practitioner informed of progress or new developments.

Strategies of 'Work'

Following the recognition of a problem as 'error' and the call to a practitioner if necessary, the 'Scientist' proceeds to 'work' alone, using one or more 'work' strategies. These strategies employ the 'error-Truth' patterns which sequentially continue to objectify 'error' and make it the agent of the 'claim,' devaluate 'error' through 'Science metaphysics,' and make the self a temporary passive receptor, possibly of the 'error' but potentially of 'Science' so that the self can again assume agency.

These 'work' strategies include:

a) Declaration: This is a naming of a specific Christian Science 'Truth' or reaching a clear understanding or assessment of one's true situation.

> Example: After recalling that she should be in a state of spiritual preparedness, Mrs. M wiped off her hand and "thought of the practice in the Scientific Statement of Being[1] Mrs. Eddy gives us, it's sometimes a help. Andah I was really convinced that there was no sensation of pain in matter and that ah matter could not change its condition" (B6:6f).

b) Repetitious Declaration of a 'Truth' or of a psalm: This strategy is typically used for attaining either

(1) "realization" or solving a general concern;

> Example: After contacting the practitioner who told her to "Look away from the problem and realize God's living presence made manifest" Mrs. O thought that the only way she could do that "was to keep declaring that I realized God's living presence made manifest...Well, I'd sit down many times a day an work an work with that and try ta declare that truth, that I realized God's living presence made manifest" (B10:14f).

(2) or solution to a particular erroneous suggestion.

> Example: After declaring the truth of his situation, D.B. "got to the point that every time that the thing seemed to project itself, that I went through these thoughts" (C10:21f).

c) Spiritual Argument: This resembles the declaration of 'Truths,' but it completes the reasoning so that the user systematically reinterprets his situation within the logic of 'Science metaphysics.'

> Example: After deciding that her problem called for a "very clear and specific Christian Science treatment," Mrs. M "recalled a previous healing of a burn from boiling water, "And it was very encouraging to me to recall thatah if I had proved that matter was painless in that small way ah that same Principle applied in this case. I got to thinking about some of

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[1]The Scientific Statement of Being: "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual. (Eddy, 1875:468)

the things that Mrs. Eddy says about man on page four hundred and seventy-five of Science and Health. I think about it really often...because we need to know the Truth about man. But I knew that I had to see man as image, as idea, of the spiritual idea. Andahm I knew too that I had only one Mind, that I reflected the one Mind, andah in that Mind there were no false beliefs or erroneous thoughts, and that therefore I was capable of knowing the Truth about myself and about mankind in general" (B7:14f).

d) Direct Negation of Error, by confronting it.

Example: After calling a practitioner and reciting the Scientific Statement of Being and other facts about her "spiritual self," Mrs. W said: "Pretty soon it came to me that I had to absolutely kick error out and I heard myself saying, 'Error, get out of here!'" (B9:15f).

Example: Mrs. M, after spilling boiling water on her hand "kept denying the suggestion" whenever she felt the pain (B6:15f).

e) Guarding Against or Avoiding 'Error.'

Example: Mrs. M also said that "I didn't look at the hand because obviously the only reason for looking at the hand would be that I expected something to be wrong" (B6:9f).

Example: Mrs. O, working on a general problem of worry said that "andah then I watched my every thought and to keep every thought that was not pure out of my consciousness" (B11:5f).

f) Forgetting, Being Busy, Being "Unconscious" of Pain or Apparent Injury.

Example: Mrs. W, once she had denied 'error' said that "the next thing I had to do was make my self go around and run some errands, instead of giving in to error" (B9:19f).

Example: Mrs. F, after declaring 'Truths of Being,' said that "I forgot all about the sense of illness, and went back to withe busyness of the afternoon...And I didn't realize until late in the afternoon, I didn't have a problem" (B4:26f).

* * *

To summarize, 'work' for the 'Scientist' is a managed, systematic approach to life experiences using a series of interpretive transformations to establish the 'Science' province of meaning as paramount reality. The practicing 'Scientist' claims to do this 'work' daily to reinterpret events,

thoughts, and feelings within the 'Science' system of relevances. In the course of daily life, the 'Scientist' may confront an experience which is considered particularly problematic. By reflecting on this experience as it continues to unfold, the 'Scientist' "memberships" it to the category of a 'claim.' This 'claim' then becomes the isolated object of a sequence of strategies of 'work' which employ various forms of the 'error-Truth' and 'Truth'-referent patterns.

The successful use of these strategies of interpretive transformations culminates in a 'healing.'

5) 'Healing'

'Healing' is a 'demonstration' or proof of the principles of 'Science.' Evidence from 'testimonies' suggests that these 'demonstrations' include a wide variety of experiences, for example, overcoming specific sickness or injury, solving problems of social relations, safety through bad weather or dangerous situations, calm and peace in oppressive conditions, allaying nervous anxiety, recognizing one's previous thoughts to be erroneous, or growing awareness of the 'Truths of Science.' Testimonial accounts contain descriptions which stand as signs by which 'Scientists' recognize 'healing,' or more properly, how they actively "membership" certain experiences to the category 'healing.'

In 'testimonies,' 'healing' is marked as a positive event or occurrence. The event occurs sequentially after completion of one or more 'work' strategies. The 'error-Truth' pattern, which uses the sequence in which the self as passive receptor is again able to reassume agency after receiving 'Science,' is employed, so that one "finds" or "realizes" that one is 'healed.' In some cases, the event-character of 'healing' is further marked by a temporal phrase such as "then" or "all of a sudden."

Even when recognized as the disappearance, absence, or non-recurrence of 'error,' the state of being 'healed' is described in positive and often absolute terms, such as being "completely healed" or "perfectly comfortable."

These markers are employed in the following sequences which indicate the possible circumstances in which experiences are labelled 'healings.'

a) 'Healing' acknowledged by the disappearance of 'error' following corrective 'work:'

> Example: Mrs. M noted, after pouring the boiling water on her hand and using the strategies of negating and forgetting about 'error' that she "realized that my hand was perfectly comfortable, fully functional, ahm no blisters, no redness, or pinkness or anything. Just-just, as if it never happened" (B6: 23f) (Emphasis added).[1]

> Example: Mrs. W had used the strategy of forgetting 'error' and noted that "after I had done a couple of errands I found that I was completely healed" (B9:23f) (Emphasis added).

b) 'Healing' realized by the absence of 'error:'

> Example: Mr. F reconstitutes experiences in which nothing adverse happened within the interpretive frame of "being protected." He notes that he often drove in very bad weather, "But the thing that impressed me was how many times I was protected in just that way...something always came up that seemed to take away any sense of anxiety or disturbance. I found that...Christian Science was so helpful to take care of those little seemingly unimportant incidents which would in another circumstance...might grow into something rather large" (A9:16f) (Emphasis added).

c) 'Healing' realized by noting the non-recurrence of 'error:'

> Example: In an example similar to Mr. F's, Mrs. L realizes after several years that she has been "completely healed" because an appendicitis attack did not recur, "and that's been a number of years ago andah I was completely healed because I have never had an attack of that since" (A6:14f) (Emphasis added).

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[1]Underlining is used to draw attention to markers of 'healing.'

'Healing' as a positive state can be further specified by constructions which signal interpretive transformations from the everyday province of meaning to the transcendent province of 'Science.'

a) A change from confusion and doubt to understanding and insight, marked by such words as "awakening," "great clearing," "inspiration," or "meaning:"

Example: Mrs. A was wondering why she didn't find her branch church exciting anymore, noting, "Andah it was really quite an awakening...And then of course I got back to Mrs. Eddy's concept of church...And it's really been quite an awakening, an I'm still working on this idea" (C5:3f) (Emphasis added).

b) A change from explicit inability or futility to success and enjoyment, marked by such words as "successful," "profitable," and "enjoyable." This specification is especially important to underscore the pragmatic function of 'work.' Competence in life and success in one's daily activities is both an index of, and a guarantee of, effective 'Science work."

Example: Mr. F described his 'healing' in the following way: "With that there was a great clearing in my thinking an I forgot all about the sense of illness, and went back to wi- the busyness of the afternoon, and found a very successful and profitable afternoon opening up for me" (B4:25f) (Emphasis added).

c) A change from disjointedness or disharmony to general harmony and synthesis marked by such as expressions as "coming together," "going together," and "sense of oneness:"

Example: Mrs. B, reading a biography of Mrs. Eddy summarizes her experience in the following terms: "a number of things seemed to go together to make it more meaningful to me" (C8: 8f) (Emphasis added).

Example: After describing how he dealt with his own problem, D.B. noted that "One additional effect...was that the entire choir which had a sort of disjointed effect...somewhere in that opera, the entire group came together and rehearsals since then have been inspiring" (C11:1f) (Emphasis added).

d) A change from amorphous dejection or anxiety to joy and well-being, marked by expressions such as "rising above" and "far transcending:"

Example: Mrs. O who had been working on a general problem of excessive worrying describes her 'healing:' "Andah all of a sudden one day I remem- I was in this room...and I felt that I was rising above the whole world, I felt I was free

> and that I was-I felt that my ah- my consciousness, I was rising above all...and I did. And all of a sudden I did realize the allness of God and God's living presence made manifest. I realized this that says I am is God and that anything else that says I am is God. I realized my oneness with God...And for that, I felt a great sense of joy... Well, it's such a different sense of joy, I always thought I had a happy life, but this was far transcending any joy I've ever had before. Andah so then I realized that that was the joy of Soul" (B11:3f) (Emphasis added).

* * *

'Healing,' while it may be acknowledged as an absence, disappearance, or non-recurrence of 'error,' is marked by members as a positive event. Those experiences which are "membershipped" to the category of 'healing' are not necessarily major life events, but may be simply a growth in understanding or success in daily routine. What qualifies experiences for membership as 'healings' is their sequential place following strategies of 'work' which the 'Scientist' evaluates as successful. By returning attention to what has just happened or by reconstituting his life into a connected series of marked events, "then" or "all of a sudden" the 'Scientist' "finds" or "realizes" that a qualitative change has "occurred." Seeing himself in a state of passive reception, no longer to 'error,' but to 'Science,' the 'Scientist' retrospectively specifies this shift as a positive state of understanding, success, harmony, joy or peace of Soul which qualitatively differs from or transcends everyday experience and especially the preceding problematic experience. This accomplishment is called 'healing.'

Conclusion

This study of Christian Science oral 'testimonies' was motivated by a desire to know how everyday experiences are transformed within the transcendent province of meaning called 'Science' which is constituted as a social reality. 'Testimonies,' as public, reconstitutive, and celebrating

phases of the process of achieving that transcendence, provide an accessible source for discovering the carefully managed ways in which members achieve that social reality.

This study has shown that in 'testimonies,' 'Scientists' use a specialized language variety with its patterns and sequences in the recounting of 'work' and 'healing' experiences, employed according to specifiable rules of performance, interpretation, and interaction, conditioned by the socially acknowledged purpose of 'giving testimony.' In so doing, 'Scientists' achieve an ongoing accomplishment of interpretive transformation by which they transfer the accent of reality from the everyday to the 'Science' province of meaning, thereby establishing solidarity within a community which shares in and sanctions that transformation. The management of the components of the communicative acts of 'testimonies' accomplishes this two-fold transcendence by governing the social distribution of members' knowledge. By bringing to bear both their background knowledge of 'Science' and their foreground knowledge appropriate to the testimonial event, members share in the transcendent province of meaning as co-participants who both perform and understand.

In other words, transcendence is an accomplishment produced by the interplay of speech and shared knowledge in social interaction which cannot be reduced to the separate elements of its occurrence--such as the sacred language variety, the testimonial form, 'Science metaphysics,' the church setting, or the religious context. Such reduction would treat these components as "things" thereby missing the "interactive phenomenon of understanding" which Christian Scientists achieve in sharing 'testimonies' (Kjolseth, 1972). By delineating the interplay of these components, this ethnography has attempted to make available to non-Christian Scientists

the process which 'Scientists' take for granted in their 'work' and which they publicly recount in 'testimonies' every Wednesday night.

It is hoped that this ethnography, while focusing on a key communicative act of one community, will contribute to the comparative study of transcendent communication in general, which seeks to "de-mystify" these communicative events, while enhancing an understanding of how such specialized, highly distinct provinces of meaning become socially shared realities.

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